

Approved MINUTES

Tenants Together

Meeting held on Wednesday 12 June 2024

at 10.00 a.m. via Zoom

Present:

Meeting Chair – Gordon Saunders

Name	Initials	Position	Local Authority Area
Colin Stewart	CS	Chair	Aberdeen City
Shona Gorman	SG	Vice-Chair	Falkirk
Gordon Saunders	GS	Treasurer	Scottish Borders
Anne Cameron	AC	Committee Member	South Ayrshire
Donna Murray	DM	Committee Member	South Lanarkshire
Frances McGonagle	FMcG	Committee Member	West Dunbartonshire
Irina Lazarenko	IL	Committee Member	City of Edinburgh
Jackie Bugden	JB	Committee Member	Highlands
John Duffy	JD	Committee Member	North Lanarkshire
June Anderson	JA	Committee Member	Clackmannanshire
Kath Fennell	KF	Committee Member	Orkney
Liz Richardson	LR	Committee Member	Highlands
Margaret Dymond	MD	Committee Member	Renfrewshire
Norma Ferguson	NF	Committee Member	North Ayrshire
Rebecca Blackwood	RB	Committee Member	Aberdeen City
Sarah-Jane Dunbar	SJD	Committee Member	Stirling
Scott MacLeod	SMAcL	Committee Member	Highlands
Suzanne Austin	SA	Committee Member	Renfrewshire
Willie Derrick	WD	Committee Member	Stirling

In attendance:			
Carolynne Watson	CW	Scottish Government	

Apologies / Absent			
Bruce Cuthbertson	BC	Committee Member	Apologies
Eric Spence	ES	Committee Member	Absent
Linda Lennie	LL	Committee Member	Absent

Scotland's tenant participation and engagement network

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	AGENDA ITEMS	ACTION
1	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of interest</p> <p>GS welcomed everyone to the first meeting of Tenants Together.</p> <p>Under Declarations of Interest, CS noted his role as a Board member of the Scottish Housing Regulator, GS noted his role on the Board of TIS, MD noted her role on the Board of TPAS and SG noted her role on the Board of Link Housing.</p>	
2	<p>Business Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Matters Arising from previous meeting</u>: There are no Matters Arising which are not already covered on today's agenda. • <u>Treasurer's report</u>: GS noted that he and CS will shortly be completing a handover, following GS assuming the role of Treasurer at the AGM. For this meeting, CS presented the Treasurer's report, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening balance at 1 April 24 - £4,773.37. ○ April spend- £293.39. ○ May spend - £0. ○ Income received – NIL. ○ Closing balance at 31 May 24 - £4,479.98. ○ Cash in hand - £16.37. • <u>Correspondence</u>: NIL. 	
3	<p>Website and Basecamp training</p> <p>CS demonstrated how to subscribe to the Newsletter from the website, and the Tenants Together Main project on Basecamp, highlighting the meeting dates for the remainder of the year and how to find member contact information and working group details. CS also demonstrated how to access, subscribe to and use the Tenants Together calendar on Basecamp, and for newer members, also highlighted how to find the Basecamp training videos for further information on Basecamp.</p>	
4	<p>Sub groups</p> <p><u>Inclusive Living & AHIL</u></p> <p>LR reported that there has been no recent meeting of the AHIL group on which to update. CW noted that now the AGM has passed, members may want to re-commence meetings of the internal Inclusive Living working group. CW agreed to follow up on this, and will identify a suitable date for a meeting of the group.</p>	

Communications group

CS reported that the Communications group has been largely focused on the re-branding project recently, but will shortly be moving onto new work, including developing a Communications Strategy for Tenants Together and planning for promotion of Tenants Together.

HRA

FMcG has shared an updated timeline with members on the issues raised in West Dunbartonshire on HRA. Pending a final meeting on the subject, the issue in WDC is largely resolved to the satisfaction of tenants. Members agreed that more consideration on HRA is required in order to form decisions on next steps. CS noted that the Strategic Board met on Friday, and the topic of the HRA rules was raised. CS agreed to monitor this and keep the group updated on progress as appropriate.

In the meantime, the HRA update will come off the agenda for the main Tenants Together meetings but can be reinstated if the working group begins meeting again.

SHR Liaison group

SG reported on the work of the SHR Liaison group. The group met with SHR on 7 May, discussing SHR's new Regulatory Framework which launched on 1 April, and the 'How we Regulate' tenants guide developed by SHR. The group also received an update on the SHR Tenant Advisor panel and the TP thematic which is being carried out by TPAS.

SHR are currently working on a review of Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) indicators. The Regulator is keeping a close eye on RSL financial status and capacity as well as governance issues. SG noted that the group raised points on tenant health and safety and updated on the re-branding work with SHR. The next meeting will be held in July, and Director of Regulation, Helen Shaw will be in attendance.

Rent affordability group & SG Rent stakeholder group

CS provided an update on the SG stakeholder working group, noting that the final meeting of the working group took place a couple of weeks ago and a report summarising outcomes from the group will be published shortly. CS will share the report link with the group when this is published.

Members noted that their preference would be for 'affordability' to be determined based on whole housing costs, particularly taking into account current high energy costs, and in some areas, transport costs associated with living in a particular area.

	<p><u>Housing to 2040 working group and SG Strategic Board</u></p> <p>CS updated on the Strategic Board, the work of which has recently focused on the declared housing emergency and consideration of actions to address this. More detailed work is underway at present to expand on this, and further information will be available in the coming weeks.</p>	
5	<p>Working group representation</p> <p>CS ran through the list of working groups which members are currently involved with, and highlighted where to find information on the working groups on Basecamp. CS noted that for new members in particular, it will be helpful to review the information on working groups, and to consider which groups they may be keen to get involved with.</p> <p>Meeting with Minister</p> <p>The rescheduled meeting with Mr McLennan will be taking place tomorrow, 13th June, and will cover a range of topics agreed by the group at pre-meeting. CS will Chair this session, and will also provide an update to the Minister on recent work, and rebranding from Regional Networks to Tenants Together.</p>	
6	<p>Rebranding and reorganisation</p> <p>Now that the rebranding project is complete and Tenants Together is successfully up and running, the group discussed how the project had unfolded to identify what had worked well and any lessons learned. The group acknowledged the valuable support and contribution from TIS on the project.</p> <p>Members agreed that while the project was a significant undertaking, the outcomes to date have been very beneficial, with positive feedback received so far on how engaging and attractive the new logo and branding is, and a new structure which will better fit the way the group is working now.</p> <p>Members highlighted their appreciation for the effort and commitment of the working group, and for the dedication of CS and SG in progressing the project, and SG also noted the valuable contribution of GS and AC.</p>	
7	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Members discussed recent tenant satisfaction survey outcomes, noting the decline in satisfaction on ARC indicators which was highlighted at a recent Scottish Tenant Engagement Network event. SG also noted recent discussion at the SFHA conference on engaging tenants and the challenges associated with this, including the importance of offering a wide range of options for tenants to participate.</p>	

	<p>Members also noted that it is difficult to reliably compare tenant satisfaction results given the variety of different methods of surveying used across the sector. It would be beneficial to have an accurate and up to date picture of practice in the sector at the moment on TP, and a means of sharing good practice which others can learn from.</p> <p>Whilst it is important to be realistic that not every tenant will want to be involved in TP, members emphasised how important it is for tenants to participate and have their say in the services they receive from their landlord.</p>	
8	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Thursday 15 August 2024 at 11am – In-person meeting, venue tbc.</p>	

Date	20-Jun-2024
Proposed	LR
Seconded	RB